

REMARKS

This application contains claims 1-5, 7-14, 16-26 and 28-41. Claim 17 is allowed. Claims 9, 14, 16, 25, 28, 29 and 37 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 10-13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 26, 34 and 38-41 are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the previous Official Action in this case, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 14, 16, 18-21, 26 and 30-33 were rejected over Lewis (U.S. Patent 6,259,898), while finding the subject matter of claims 6-13, 15, 17, 22-25, 27-29 and 34-41 to be patentable over this reference. While disagreeing with the grounds of rejection, Applicant amended the claims in accordance with the Examiner's findings in order to expedite issuance of a patent on the subject matter that the Examiner found to be allowable. Applicant was therefore much distressed to find that in the present Official Action, the Examiner reversed himself and rejected - over the same Lewis reference - some of the claims whose subject matter he had previously found to be patentable.

In the present Official Action, claims 9-13, 25, 29 and 37-41 were objected to for depending from rejected base claims, but were deemed to recite patentable subject matter. Applicant has accordingly amended the claims as follows, in the hope that this amendment will finally lead to issuance of the desired patent:

- Independent claim 1 has now been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 9, which has been canceled. Claims 10-13, which formerly depended from claim 9, have been amended to depend from claim 1.
- Independent claim 22 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 25, now canceled.

- Independent claim 26 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 28 and 29, now canceled.
- Independent claim 34 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 37, now canceled. Claims 38-41, which formerly depended from claim 37, have been amended to depend from claim 34.


Therefore, claims 1, 10-13, 22, 26, 34 and 38-41 are all believed to be in condition for allowance. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the subject matter of the original claims in a continuation of this application.

Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 14, 16, 18-24, 26, 28 and 30-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Lewis, taken alone or in view of Taylor (U.S. Patent 6,195,456). While disagreeing with the grounds of rejection, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 22, 26 and 34 as noted above in order to expedite issuance of a patent on the subject matter that the Examiner found to be allowable. Claims 18, 19 and 21 have been amended to depend from allowed claim 17. Claims 14 and 16 have been canceled. Based on these amendments, claims 2-5, 7, 8, 18-21, 23, 24, 30-33, 35 and 36 now depend from allowable base claims, and are therefore believed to be allowable, as well.

Applicant believes the amendments and remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the objections and grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,
BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR, & ZAFMAN LLP


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By: 
Eric S. Hyman
Reg. No. 30,139

12400 Wilshire Boulevard
Seventh Floor
Los Angeles, California 90025
(310) 207-3800

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Kumiko Alexander